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PACIFIC POEMS.





PACIFIC POEMS

BY

JOAQUIN MILLER.



LONDON:

WHITTINGHAM AND WILKINS.

1871.

TO MAUD.



ARAZONIAN.



*Because the skies were blue, because
The sun in fringes of the sea
Was tangled, and delightfully
Kept dancing on as in a waltz,
And tropic trees bow'd to the seas,
And bloom'd and bore, years through and through,
And birds in blended gold and blue
Were thick and sweet as swarming bees,
And sang as if in Paradise,
And all that Paradise was spring,
Did I too sing with lifted eyes,
Because I could not choose but sing.*

*With garments full of sea-winds blown
From isles beyond of spice and balm.
Beside the sea, beneath her palm,
She waits as true as chisell'd stone.
My childhood's child ! my June in May !
So wiser than thy father is,
These lines, these leaves, and all of this
Are thine, a loose, uncouth bouquet.
So wait and watch for sail and sign ;
A ship shall mount the hollow seas,
Blown to thy place of blossom'd trees,
And birds, and song, and summer-shine.
Shall I return with lifted face,
Or head held down as in disgrace,
To hold thy two brown hands in mine ?*



ARAZONIAN.

AND I have said, and I say it ever,
As the years go on and the world
goes over,
'Twere better to be content and clever
In trading in cattle and tossing of clover—
In the grazing of cattle and the growing of grain,
Than a strong man striving for fame or gain.
Be even as kine in the red-tipp'd clover ;
For they lie down and their rests are rests,
And the days are theirs come sun come rain,
To lie, rise up, and repose again ;
While we wish, yearn, and do pray in vain,
And hope to ride on the billows of breasts,
And hope to rest in the haven of bosoms,

Till the heart is sicken'd and the fair hope dead ;
Be even as clover with its crown of blossoms,
Even as blossoms ere the bloom is shed,
Kiss'd by kine and the brown sweet bee,
For these have the sun, and moon, and air,
And never a bit of the burthen of care,
And with all of our caring what more have we ? "

He said these things as he stood with the Squire
By the river's rim in the fields of clover,
While the stream flow'd under and the clouds flew
over,
With the sun tangled in and the fringes afire.
So the Squire lean'd with a kind desire
To humour his guest, and to hear his story ;
For his guest had gold, and he yet was clever,
And mild of manner ; and what was more, he,
In the morning's ramble, had praised the kine,
The clovers' reach and the meadows fine,
And so made the Squire his friend for ever.

His brow was chisell'd with a touch of time,

His rich black beard had a fringe of rime,
As silk and silver inwove together.

There were hoops of gold all over his hands,
And across his breast, in chains and bands,
Broad and massive as belts of leather.

And the belts of gold were bright in the sun,
But brighter than gold his black eyes shone,
Brighter than beautiful Santan stone,
Brighter even than balls of fire,
As he said hot praise in the face of the Squire.

“ The pines bent over, the river under,
The cabin cover’d with thatch of palm,
Where time had sunder’d the peaks asunder
By sabre stroke and by storm and calm ;
And this in the land where the sun goes down,
And gold is gather’d by tide and by stream,
And maidens are brown as the cocoa brown,
And a life is a love and a love is a dream ;
Where the winds come in from the far Cathay
With odour of spices and balm and bay,
And summer abideth for aye and aye,

Nor comes in a tour with the stately June,
And comes too late and returns too soon.

“She stood in the shadows as the sun went down,
Fretting her curls with her fingers brown,
As tall as the silk-tipp’d tasseled corn.
And her proud lip curl’d with a sun-clime scorn,
As she ask’d, Is she better or fairer than I ?—
She, that blonde in the land beyond,
Where the sun is hid and the seas are high—
That you gather in gold as the years go on,
And hoard and hide it away for her
As a squirrel burrows the black pine burr ?
So I was fretted, and brow a-frown
I said, She is fairer, and I loved her first,
And shall love her last come the worst to worst.
Now her eyes were black and her skin was brown,
But her lips grew livid, and her eyes afire,
As I said this thing : and higher and higher
The hot words ran till the booming thunder
Peal’d in the crags and the pine-tops under,
While up by the cliff in the murky skies

It look'd as the clouds had caught the fire—
The flash and fire of her wonderful eyes.

“ She turn'd from the door and down to the river,
And mirror'd her face in the whimsical tide ;
Then threw back her hair, as throwing a quiver,
As an Indian throws it back far from his side,
And free from his hands, swinging fast to the
shoulder,

When rushing to battle ; and rising she sigh'd
And shook, and shiver'd as aspens shiver.

Then a great green snake slid into the river,
Glistening, green, and with eyes of fire.
Quick, double-handed she seized a boulder,
And cast it with all the fury of passion,
As with lifted head it went curving across,
Curving and curving, lifting higher and higher,
Bent and beautiful as a river moss.

Then, smitten, it turned, bent, broken and doubled,
And lick'd out its tongue like a forked fire,
And sank, and the troubled waters bubbled,
And then swept on in their old swift fashion.

“ I lay in my hammock: the air was heavy
And hot and threat’ning; the very heaven
Was holding its breath; and bees in a bevy
Hid under my thatch; and birds were driven
In clouds to the rocks in a hurried whirr
As I peer’d down by the path for her;
She stood like a bronze bent over the river,
The proud eyes fixed, the passion unspoken,
When the heavens broke like a great dyke broken:
Then ere I fairly had time to give her
A shout of warning, a rushing of wind
And the rolling of clouds with deafening din,
And a darkness that had been black to the blind
Came down, as I shouted, Come in, come in,
Come under the roof, come up from the river,
As up from a grave—come now, or come never!
The tassel’d tops of the pines were as weeds,
The red-woods rock’d like lake side reeds
And the world seem’d darken’d and drown’d for ever:

“ One time in the night as the black wind
shifted,

And a flash of lightning stretch'd over the stream,
I seem'd to see her with her brown hands lifted ;
Only seem'd to see, as one sees in a dream ;
For what the devil could the lightning show
In a night like that, I should like to know !

“ And then I slept, and sleeping I dream'd
Of great green serpents with tongues of fire,
And of death by drowning, and of after death—
Of the day of judgment, wherein it seem'd
That she, the heathen, was bidden higher,
Higher than I, that I clung to her side,
And clinging struggled, and struggling cried,
And crying, waken'd, all weak of my breath.

“ Long leaves of the sun lay over the floor,
And a chip-monk chirp'd in the open door,
But above on his crag the eagle scream'd,
Scream'd as he never had scream'd before.
I rush'd to the river, the flood had gone
Like a thief, with only his tracks upon
The weeds and grasses and warm wet sand,

And I ran after with reaching hand,
And call'd as I reach'd and reach'd as I ran ;
And ran till I reached the cañon's van,
Where the waters lay in a bent lagoon,
Hook'd and crook'd like the hornèd moon.

“ Here in the surge where the waters met,
And the warm wave lifted, and the winds did fret
The wave till it foam'd with rage on the land,
She lay with the wave on the warm white sand ;
Her rich hair trail'd with the trailing weeds,
And her small brown hands lay prone or lifted
As the wave sang strophes in the broken reeds,
Or paused in pity, and in silence sifted
Golden sands, as upon her grave.
And as sure as you see yon browsing kine,
As I shudd'ring reach'd my hand in the wave
Her hand was lifted and reach'd to mine.

“ Now mind I tell you, I cried, Come in,
Come out of the storm, come up from the river ;
Cried, and call'd, in that desolate din,

Though I did not rush out, and in plain words give
her

A wordy warning of the flood to follow,
Word by word, and letter by letter,
But she knew it as well as I, and better ;
For once in the desert of New Mexico
(I had heard of a place where the Arozit
Did shoot gold bullets at buffalo,
And she was with me in search of it)
I laid me down in the desert hollow,
Faint unto death on the hard hot sand,
Utterly famish'd, and ready to die,
While she at my side bent tenderly over,
Shielding my face from the sun as a cover,
And wetting my face, as she watch'd the way,
From a skin she had borne through the heat of
the day—

I had emptied mine in the heat of the morning—
When a speck arose in the red-hot sky—
A speck no larger than a lady's hand,
While the thunder mutter'd far over the plain,
Like a monster bound or a beast in pain,

And she sprang the instant, and gave the warning,
With her brown hand pointed to the burning skies.
I was too weak unto death to rise,
But she knew the peril, and her iron will
Dragg'd me up to the palm-tipp'd hill,
Where the fiercest beasts in a brotherhood
Of perfectest peace expectant stood,
With lifted heads, and their limbs a-quiver ;
And ere she barely had time to breathe
The waters began to surge and seethe,
From hill to hill a booming river,
Even while yet the sun shot fire,
Without the shield of a cloud above,
Filling the cañon as you would fill
A wine cup, drinking in swift desire,
With the brim new-kiss'd by the lips you love.

“ So you see she knew—knew perfectly well,
As well as I could shout and tell,
The mountains would send a flood to the plain,
Sweeping the gorge like a hurricane,
When the fire flash'd, and the thunder fell.

Therefore it is wrong and I say therefore
Unfair that a mystical brown wing'd moth
Or midnight bat should forevermore
Flit past, pursue me, or fly before,
Dimly and limning in each fair place
The full fix'd eyes and the sad brown face,
So forty times worse than if it was wroth.

“ I took up the gold hid in rock and in earth,
Hid over the door and hid under the hearth,
Hoarded and hidden as the world went over
For the love of a blonde by a sun-brown'd lover,
And I said to myself as I set my face
To the east and afar from the desolate place,
She has braided her tresses and through her tears,
Look'd away to the west, for years, the years
That I have wrought where the sun tans brown.
Alone and in tears, with her head held down,
Where the ships sail out and the seas swirl in,
Forgetting to knit, and refusing to spin,
For my long delay where the sun burns brown.
She shall lift her head, she shall see her lover,

She shall hear his voice like a sea that rushes,
She shall hold his gold in her hands of snow,
And down on her breast she shall hide her blushes,
And never a care shall her true heart know,
While the clods are below, or the clouds are above
her.

“ On the fringe of the night she stood with her
pitcher,
At the village pump ; and oh ! passing fair.
I am riper now, I said, but am richer,
And I lifted my hand to my beard and hair.
She look’d to the west, with her arm arched over,
Looking from me, her sun-brown’d lover,
I said to myself, with a hot heart thump,
And stepp’d me nearer to the storm stain’d pump,
As approaching a friend, for ’twas here of old
Our troths were plighted and the tale was told.

“ How young she was and how fair she was.
How tall as a palm, and how pearly fair,
As the night came down on her glorious hair !
Then the night grew deep and the eye grew dim,

And a sad faced figure began to swim
And float in my face, flit past, then pause,
With her hands held up and her head held down,
Yet face to face ; and her face was brown.
Now why should she come without call or cause ?
And why did she rise and confront me there,
With the mold on her face and the moist in her hair ?
And a mystical stare in her marvellous eyes ?
I had call'd to her twice, Come in, come in,
Come out of the storm to the calm within.
Now, that is the reason I feel surprise,
That for ever and ever her face should rise,
Facing face to face with her great sad eyes.
I said then to myself, and I say it again,
And will say it ever, for I know it true,
That I did all that a man could do,
(Some good men's doings are done in vain,)
To save that passionate child of the sun,
That beautiful bronze with its soul of fire,
Its tropical love and its kingly ire,
That child as fix'd as a pyramid,
As tall as a tula and as pure as a nun,

And all there is of it the all I did,
As often happens, was done in vain.

“ She is marvellous young and is wonderful fair,
I said again, and my heart grew bold,
And beat and beat a charge for my feet.
Time that defaces us, places, and replaces us,
And trenches the faces and the forms of all,
Has traced here neither a line nor scrawl.
'Tis the hair of gold that I vex'd of old,
The marvellous flowing flower of hair,
And the peaceful eyes in their sweet surprise,
That I have kiss'd till the head swam round,
And the delicate curve of the dimpled chin,
And the pouting lips and the pearls within,
Are the same, the same, but so young, so fair !
My heart leapt out and back at a bound,
As a child that starts, then stops, then lingers.
How wonderful young ! I lifted my fingers
And fell to counting the round years over,
That I had dwelt where the sun goes down.
Four full hands, and a finger over !

She does not know me, her truant lover,
I said to myself, for her brow was a-frown
She does not know me, her long lost lover,
For my beard's so long and my skin's so brown,
That I well might pass myself for another.
So I lifted my voice and I spoke aloud ;
Anett, my darling ! Anett Macloud !
She started, she stood, she turn'd, amazed,
And said, as in terror, 'The man is crazed,
And calls the maiden name of mother.'

" Let the world turn over, and over, and over,
And toss and tumble like a beast in pain,
Crack, quake, and tremble, and turn full over
And die, and never rise up again ;
There is nothing that is, be it beast or human,
Love of maiden or the lust of man,
Curse of man or the kiss of woman,
For which I care or for which I can
Give a love for a love or a hate for a hate,
A curse for a curse or a kiss for a kiss,
Since life has neither a bane nor a bliss,

To one that is cheek by jowl with fate ;
For I have lifted and reach'd far over
To the tree of promise, and have pluck'd of all
And ate—ate ashes and myrrh and gall.
Go down, go down, to the fields of clover,
Down with the kine in the pastures fine,
And give no thought or care or labour
For maid or man, good name or neighbour ;
For I have given, and what have I ?
Given all my youth, my years, and labour,
And a love as warm as the world is cold,
For a beautiful bright and delusive lie.
Gave youth, gave years, gave love for gold,
Giving and getting, yet what have I
But an empty palm and a face forgotten,
And a hope that's dead and a heart that's rotten ?

“ The red ripe stars hang low overhead,
Let the good and the light of soul reach up,
Pluck gold as plucking a butter-cup ;
But I am as lead and my hands are red,
And the purple robe of the proud Eternal,

The Tyrian blue with its fringe of gold,
Shrouding His Countenance, fold on fold,
The angels hurl'd to the realms infernal,
Over the walls in unholy wars,
That man misnameth the falling stars,
Are dull and tame as a tale that's told.
For the loves that hasten and the hates that linger,
The nights that darken and the days that glisten,
And men that lieth and maids that listen,
I care not even the snap of my finger.
So the sun climbs up and on and over,
And the days go out and the tides come in,
And the pale moon rubs on the purple cover
Till worn as thin and as bright as tin ;
But the ways are dark and the days are dreary,
And the dreams of youth are but dust in age,
And the heart gets harden'd, and the hands grow
weary,
Holding them up for their heritage.

“ So I have said, and I say it over
And can prove it over and over again ;

That the four-footed beasts on the red crown'd
clover,
The hornèd and pieded beasts on the plain,
That lie down, rise up, and repose again,
And do never take care or toil or spin,
Nor buy, nor build, nor gather in gold,
Though the days go out and the tides come in,
Are better than we by a thousand fold ;
For what is it all, in the words of fire,
But a vexing of soul and a vain desire ? "





OREGONIA.



*Sad song of the wind in the mountains,
And the sea wave of grass on the plain,
That breaks in bloom-foam by the fountains,
And forests, that breaketh again
On the mountains, as breaketh a main.*

*Sad symphony, wild, and unmeasured,
Weed warp and woof woven in strouds,
Strange truths that a stray soul has treasured,
Truths seen as through folding of shrouds,
Or as stars through the rolling of clouds.*

*Bold thoughts that were strong as the grizzlies,
But now weak in their prison of words;
Bright fancies that flash'd like the glaciers,
Now dimmed like the plumage of birds,
And butterflies huddled as herds.*



OREGONIA.

“ Here are the continuous woods,
Here rolls the Oregon,
And hears no sound save its own dashing.”

SCENE I.

A hacienda on the Sacramento. SANTONA standing alone, looking out on the moonlit mountains.

SANTONA.

DIABLA looms like a sea-girt isle above
The rolling clouds that break in foam
of snow ;
Beyond, the buttes lie flashing in the moon,
Like silver tents pitch'd in the fields of heaven,
While still beyond, Sierra's gleaming peaks,
Wrapp'd in their shrouds of everlasting snow,
Do stand in line as I look heavenward,

Like mighty mile-stones on the way to God.
Ofttimes when the eye of the Eternal,
That no man looks into unveil'd,
Has flooded up with tide tears of the sea,
And the stately West bow'd, red with weeping,
O'er the lowly couch of the dying day,
Devout, uncover'd I have stood in awe
And reverently thought I did behold
Resting places for souls wing'd heavenward,
And that it was theirs to robe in white
Because so near the throne of heaven.
Gazing I have stood till deep night-fall
And seen them fold their mantles round
Their forms, and in the darkness stalk away,
And in the stillness so profoundly still
It seem'd I heard their retreating tread.

ZANORA approaching, offers him her hand.

Santona, I have come to say farewell,
My father commands, my mother entreats it,
And I have promised and shall keep my promise.
I have mastered myself to say these things,
As a hunter would master a hungry lion.

Hear me, be strong and say farewell.
All things are his who is brave enough to wait;
Dare confront the solid lines of hours.
Here, standing here, last night, he said,
While the fair white moon did lay her pallid face,
As weary, on the strong broad breast of heaven,
And her yellow hair trail'd down upon us,
And the red stars hung like threads of gold:—
Zanora, I am old and utterly alone,
And all my wealth by Mexico's laws revert,
Should I die heirless, unto the state,
But you, my wife, would be my widow fair,
With all my gold and broad rich reach of lands,
A very queen to choose a worthy lover.
And when I told him all he call'd me brave
And true, and said he knew it all before,
And sought but to endow me with his wealth.
So then I promised and will be his,
Faithful and true, even unto the end,
Give me your hand in mine and say farewell.

[*SANTONA with a laugh of scorn swiftly
descends from the verandah, mounts
his steed and disappears.*

ZANORA looking out into the night, after a long silence :

How dismally the Cayoté jibbers
In the Chimees on the rugged hills ;
The red-tongued thunder talks afar,
And in the south I hear the muffled roar
Of the California lion, still beyond.

SCENE II.

A rugged spur of Mount Hood overlooking the Willamette river. LAMONTE, a mountaineer, pitches his solitary camp for the night and contemplates the scene.

LAMONTE.

A flush'd and weary messenger awest,
Is standing at the half-closed door of day,
As he would say, good-night ; and now his bright
Red cap he tips to me and turns his face.
Were it an unholy thing to say, an angel
Stood beside the door with uplifted seal ?

For behold the door now seal'd with blood-red seal
That burns and spreads o'er half the mighty West.
Never, never more shall the dead day rise
Therefrom, but must be born and come anew.

The tawny, solemn night, child of the East,
Trails her mournful robes on the distant woods
And comes this way with firm and stately step.
Afront, and very high, she wears her shining
Silver breast-plate, and on her gloomy brow
The radiant Venus burns like flashing wit.
Behold ! in her gorgeous flow of hair she wears
A million glittering jewell'd gems,
Spilling their molten gold on the dewy grass.
Throned on the boundless plain, and gazing
Calmly down on the red-seal'd tomb of day,
Resting her form against the Rocky Mountains
She rules with silent power a peaceful world.

'Tis midnight now. The bent and broken moon,
Batter'd, black, as from a thousand battles,
Hangs silent on the purple walls of heaven.

The angel warrior, guard of the gates eternal,
Girt in battle harness sleeps upon the field ;
But when to-morrow comes, when wicked men
That fret the patient earth are all astir,
He will resume his shield, and facing earthward,
Guard the gates of heaven from the sins of earth.

'Tis morn. Behold the kingly day now leaps
The eastern wall of earth with sword in hand.
Clad in a flowing robe of mellow light,
Like a king that has regain'd his throne,
He warms his drooping subjects into joy,
That rise rejoiced to do him homage,
And rules with regal pomp the universal world.

Far, far down in yon narrow spruce-lined cañon
Is the storm-hid home of ghostly darkness.
I see him now, as down and down I peer,
Crouch down, and shrink, and creep still up the
gorge,
Like some great beast that would conceal its form
In nervous fear from the gaze of man.

The Willamette flashes back afar,
And down his path of palms goes even on
An endless caravan to some fair Mecca.
On either side he spreads his yellow vales
With strips of foamy streams and fringe of green,
As a merchant of the storied East unfolds
His gorgeous wealth of green and yellow silks.

'Tis harvest time, and valiant Nature bears
Upon earth's broad and unfailing bosom
A yellow shield of bright and gleaming gold,
Wrought out by patient husbandmen to guard
And to protect his race against the hosts of famine.

Parting the purple curtains of the gods
With flashing helmets that defy the clouds,
And do make fierce fellowship with the stars,
Mount Hood ! fair Saint Helens ! eternal
As the sun, from this my mossy mountain throne
With bow'd and uncover'd head, I greet ye.

Snowy breasts on Nature's swelling bosom—
Nature full and bounteous—O let me draw

Inspiration holy from ye, as a child
Draws milk from a loving mother's breast,
And be your child, your yearning wayward child,
And sitting here as on a parent's knee
Gaze my fill into the face of Nature.

*A Stranger descends the mountain gesticulating
and talking to himself.*

SANTONA.

O for a name that black-eyed maids would sigh,
And lean with parted lips at mention of.
That I should seem so tall in the minds of men,
That I could walk beneath the arch'd doorway of
God,
And pluck the ripe red stars as I pass'd on,
As favour'd guests do pluck the purple grapes
That hang above the humble entrance way
Of a palm-thatch'd mountain inn of Mexico.
Alas ! I am so restless. There is that
Within me that doth rebel and rise against
The all I am and half I see in others ;

And were it not for a contempt for coward
Act of flying defeated from the world,
As if I fear'd and dared not face its ills,
I should ere this have known—known more, or
 less—

Than any flesh that frets this sullen earth.

I know not where such thoughts will lead
 me to :

I have had a fear they would drive me mad,
And then I have flatter'd myself, and said
The soul has outgrown the body—the soul
Aspires to the stars, and in its struggles up
Does make the dull flesh quiver like an aspen.

LAMONTE.

Why ! whence this stranger with strange mut-
 terings,
Wearing a look he should not wear this morn,
As he picks his foot-worn way adown ?

SANTONA.

Ha ! well met indeed ! most glad am I
To touch once more the high-tide mark of man

That beats against this western world's fierce
Rugged mountain wall, a fretted restless sea.

LAMONTE.

Then you would leave this island in the clouds,
And descend into that mad and bitter
Sea of subtle, selfish, and uncertain men ?

SANTONA.

Subtle and selfish men ! ah ! that's the term !
And if you be but earnest in your spleen,
I'll stand beside you on this crag and curse
And hurl my clench'd fists down on their heads
Till I am hoarse as yonder cataract.

LAMONTE.

Why, no, my friend, I'll not consent to that.
I hate not man at all, in truth. As man
By nature is, he bears within himself
A nobility of soul that makes him half a god ;
But as he hath made himself in this
His universal thirst for gold and pomp,
And purchased fame and bubble honours,
Forgetting good, neglecting helpless age,

And rushing rough-shod over lowly merit,
I do hold him a sorry worm indeed ;
And so I have turn'd me quietly aside
To the majesty of my peaceful wood.
There is a freshness there and fairness,
A candour and unlanguaged harmony
That wins you, and you worship unawares.

SANTONA.

Ah, so I read in books about your woods ;
But as for me, I'd rather sleep at night,
Where panthers do not scream me deaf, and glare
At me with eyes that do outflash the stars.
Besides a stomach is a most exacting thing ;
Neglect it but a day and you do think
A deal more strong of meat than grandest scene.
These wilds look well in books ; hereafter I
Will be content to view them there, and deep
Inspiration drink at second hand, and see
Through other eyes these scenes, or not at all.
The fabled fount of youth led many fools,
Zealous in its pursuit to an untimely death,

And yet this thirst for fame, this hot ambition,
This soft-toned syren-tongue, enchanting fame,
Doth lead me headlong on to equal folly,
Like a wild bird charm'd by shining coils,
And swift mesmeric glare of deadly snake,
I would not break the charm, but win a world
Or die with curses blistering my lips.

LAMONTE.

You startle me ! I am unused to hear
Men talk these fierce and bitter thoughts, and yet
In the closed recesses of my soul was once
A dark and gloomy chamber where they dwelt.
Give up ambition. Crush out such thoughts
As you would crush from home a scorpion brood,
For, mark me well, they'll grow the master
And drive you on to death ; or worse, across
A thousand ruin'd homes and broken hearts.

SANTONA.

Give up ambition ! O rather than die,
And descend a lonely nameless ghost
Shivering down the dark tide of nothingness,
I'd snatch the last bank-bill a mother holds

To purchase bread for her starving babe,
And fire the homes of a thousand orphans.
The temple-burner was wiser than a king.
And yet violence is not my inner nature ;
I would embalm my name in noblest good,
I would die a death of lofty self-denial,
Only that the world beheld the sacrifice,
And men took note and told my fame to her,
That she might weep for spite and envy me
My sweet applause and dignity of death.
I would write a song eternal as the sun,
As chaste and beautiful as the moon,
That men might read as they read the stars,
In their enamelled setting in the ring above,
The crescent blue, in a perpetual delight.
But denied the art and opportunity,
I would leap strong arm'd upon the stage
Of this accidental and uncertain life,
Snatch up the slacken'd reins, and guide
The idle energies of the monster mob,
Reckless of every cost or pain to man,
To my unmatch'd honour, glory and renown,

While he should wonder, worship, and call me wise.

LAMONTE.

But would you dare the curse of man and—

SANTONA.

Dare ! I'd dare the curse of omnipotent God !
I'd build a pyramid of the whitest skulls,
And step therefrom to the spotted moon,
And thence to stars and central suns ;
Then with one grand and mighty leap would land
Unhinder'd on the shores of the gods of old.
Sword in hand, unbared and unabash'd,
I would stand in the presence of the God
Of Gods, and there on the jewell'd inner side
The walls of heaven carve with Damascus
Steel, high up, a grand and titled name,
That time nor tide could touch or tarnish.
Anything on earth, in hell or heaven,
Rather than lie a nameless forgotten clod.

LAMONTE.

Seek not to crop above the heads of men,
To be a better mark for malice's shafts,

And the voidings of dyspeptic sour stomachs.
Come to my peaceful home, and leave behind
These stormy thoughts and daring aspirations.
Earthly power is but a thing comparative.
Is not a petty chief of some lone isle,
With half-a-dozen nude and starving subjects,
As much a king as he the Czar of Rusk ?
In yonder sweet retreat and balmy place
I will abdicate and you be chief indeed.
There you will reign and tell me of the world,
Its life and lights, its sins and shadows.
My swarthy subjects will sit in circle,
And beholding your kingly presence, deem
You great indeed, and call you chief of chiefs,
And knowing no greater than yourself in
All the leafy borders of your realm,
'Gainst what can pride or ambition chafe ?

The pheasant will beat the reveille at morn,
And rouse us to the battle of the day.
A kingdom without a king save you or I,
Broader than that for which the Philip fought,

There is truth and peace, for there is nature
Serene and simple. She will be our priestess,
And in her calm and uncomplaining face
We will read her rubric and be wise.

A glass-like lake lies on this mountain top ;
You bend you o'er, and resting on your palms
Gaze down and down full fifty fathoms,
And see the speckled mountain trout that sport,
All gold and silver sheathed above,
Rich palaces, marble-built and massive,
Hewn and built ere man had named
The stars—when mighty Nimrod kept the chase.

Quilless pines, perfect as those ashore—
Mighty in proportion, and perfectly erect—
Stand dark and sullen in the silent courts.
You cast a pebble in, a nut in size,
And watch it wind and wind a weary time ;
Then see it plainly as if 'twas in your hand.
Could you believe a flood could be so pure ?
So mirror-like, so strangely beautiful ?

Some black pines press the water's edge
And droop their plumed and sable heads,
And weep above their buried comrades
All night the dewy tears of nature.

A league across, the pines have broken rank,
And stand in small platoons, or singly ;
While o'er the rolling sea-like meads
Do dash and wheel the spotted Indian steeds.
The warriors shout and gallop up and down,
And lovely maids in beaded moccasins,
Furs, all fringed with red and yellow feathers,
As tall and straight as water tulés,
Go forth in dusky beauty in their walk
Beneath the circling shadows of the pines,
Or bathe and dream along the borders of the lake.

Far beyond, where the pines crowd thick and tall,
And the waters dwindle to a narrow wedge,
The glad lake opes her pretty gushing mouth,
And down a foaming cataract of silver

Pours her ceaseless song and melody—
The source of the lovely Willametté.

At night, o'erspread by the purple robe,
The imperial Tyrian hue that folds
The invisible form of eternal God,
You will see the sentry stars come forth
And take their posts in the field above,
Around the great white tent where sleeps their chief.
You will hear the kakea singing in a dream
The wildest, sweetest song a soul can drink ;
And when the tent is folded up, and all
The gold-fringed sentries faced about
To let the pompous day-king pass along,
We two will stand upon a sloping hill,
Where white-lipp'd springs come laughing up,
With water spouting forth in merry song,
Like bridled mirth from out a school-girl's throat,
And look far down the bending Willametté,
And in his thousand graceful curves and strokes
And strange meanderings, that men misunderstand,
Read the unutterable name of God.

SANTONA.

Why, truly now, this fierce and broken land,
Seen through your eyes, assumes a fairer shape,
And I consent to join you a little time,
Not that I love the mountains more, but man the
less ;
Lead up, for you are nearer God than I.

SCENE III.

A Wood by a rivulet on a spur of Mount Hood, over-looking the Columbia. LAMONTE and SANTONA, on their way to the camp, have met with other hunters, and are reposing under the shadow of the forest. Some deer are observed descending to the brook, and one of the party seizes his rifle.

SANTONA.

Nay, my friend, don't strike them from your
covert.
Strike like a serpent in the grass conceal'd ?
What, steal into their homes, and when athirst,

And unsuspecting, they come in couples down,
 And dip their muzzles in the mossy brink,
 Then shoot them down without a chance to fly—
 The only means that God has given them,
 Poor, unarm'd mutes, to master danger ?
 Ah, now ! I see you had not thought of this.
 The hare is fleet, and quick at sight and sound,
 His coat is changed with the colour of the fields ;
 Yon deer turn brown when forest leaves are brown ;
 The dog has teeth, the cat has teeth and claws,
 And man has art and sinewy arms.
 All things that live have some means of defence.

A YOUNG HUNTER.

All—save only lovely, helpless woman.

SANTONA.

Woman has her tongue—arm'd to the teeth.

LUCUS.

Why, what next ? First man, then helpless woman,
 Receives your most questionable compliments.
 A very Timon in your raillery.
 But for this grand repose and sweet content

Of peaceful, uncomplaining Nature, now
On whose bosom we here recline and dream,
Why, you might lift your voice and rail at her.

SANTONA.

Oh ! I am out of patience with your faith !
What ! Nature quiet ? Peaceful and uncom-
plaining ?

I have seen Nature fretted like a lion caged,
Chafe like a woman cross'd and churl'd ;
Seen her tramp and foam like a whelpless bear ;
Seen her weep till earth was wet with tears,
Then turn all smiles—a jade that won her point ;
Have seen her tear the hoary hair of ocean,
While he, himself full half a world, would moan
And roll and toss his clumsy hands all day
To earth like some great helpless babe, that lay
Rock'd and cradled by an unseen nurse ;
Then stain her hem with salt sea tears ;
And when the peaceful, mellow moon came forth,
To walk and meditate among the yellow
Blooms that bless the upper purple fields,

This dyspeptic sea ran after her with
All his soul, as if to pour himself,
All sick and helpless, in her snowy lap.

Content ! she has crack'd the ribs of earth
And made her shake poor trembling man from off
Her back, as a grizzly shakes the hounds.
She has upheaved her rocky spine against
The flowing robes of the eternal God.
Nature is not content ! I have heard her
Rush at night swift down the stormy plain,
And, when the storm was thick and deep at night,
Have seen her press her face in blacken'd mask
Against my window-pane, and sob, and weep,
And wail, till great round tears ran down.
And then, as if in desperation, or in rage,
Seize hold and shake the sash and frame
Until it quail'd and quaked like aspen leaf.
I did open the window for her once,
This weeping, fretful, childish Nature,
And she, like a wood-rear'd girl, rush'd in,
And hid her trembling in a darken'd corner.

Peer down there, half a league by cliff and bough,
Into the river's white complaining face,
And see his grey hair trail'd in shifting sands.
There comes a wail of terror and despair
From his white and trembling lips a-foam,
While he lifts his thin white palms to pines
That bend dark brow'd, and sad as o'er a tomb.
No ! 'tis a pretty thought and pretty theme
That Nature reigns in majesty serene ;
But lift the skirts of Isis and be wise.

LUCUS.

Satanic pride and ambition blended,
Hatred of man and contempt of woman,
All based on a hollow and heartless pride.
While man is man, do not attempt to shine too
bright,
Consult your peace and do not shine at all,
For malice shoots alone at shining marks.
Beware such pride. I once did hear a learn'd
Man say, "By pride the angels fell."

SANTONA.

By pride they reach'd a place to fall from.

LUCUS.

And were they better or happier having
Ascended, then prostrate to fall so far ?

SANTONA.

Yes ! Let me but win the love I woo,
Enjoy her but one brief hour, then lose all,
I will be winner that one delicious hour ;
And in my memory then will have
A wall'd spring hung with cooling palms,
Where weary recollection traversing
The barren desert of my life, might pause
And bathe herself, and resting rise refresh'd.
There be some men with hope so full and strong,
Their souls feed on the future—a green field—
But mine will not go on, but backward turns
As if for something lost or left behind—
Goes back against my will, a long unturning lane,
A stray sheep from the flock that ever keeps
The dusty centre of the unwater'd way,

And looks up weary at the fasten'd gates
That lead to cooling springs and verdant banks,
But closed against me when first I pass'd.

LUCUS.

There was one once of a nature like to this ;
He stood a barehead boy upon a cliff
Pine-crown'd, that hung high beetling a bleak
 north sea,
His long 'bright hair did stream like yellow silk,
His sea-blue eyes did lie twin lakes
O'erhung by mountain arched in virgin snow.
He was far astray, and friendless and alone,
A tropic bird blown through the north frost wind.
He stood o'er the sea in the cold white night,
His thin face lifted to the flashing stars,
And did talk familiarly face to face,
As confronting a merchant across a counter,
And in vehement blasphemy did say,
“ God, put aside this world—show me another ;
God, this world's a cheat—hand down another !
I will not buy—not have it as a gift.

Put it aside and hand me down another.
Another! another! still another,
Till I have tried the fairest world that hangs
Upon the walls and broad dome of your shop,
The finest one that has come from your hand,
For I am proud of soul and regal born,
And will not have a cheap and cheating world."

SANTONA.

Noble youth! So God gave him another?

LUCUS.

What! The poor blasphemous beggar!
(For so the tale must run to now be read),
A bear as of old came from the woods
And tore him there on that storm-swept cliff—
A grim and grizzled bear, like unto hunger.
A tall ship sail'd adown the sea next morn,
And, standing with his glass upon the prow,
The captain saw a vulture on a cliff,
Gorging, pecking, and stretching his long neck,
Bracing his raven feathers against the wind.

SANTONA.

My soul is faint. A tale while it may rest.

LUCUS.

She was tall and fair, and gentle as a fawn,
Her eyes were brown and lovely as a dream,
Her voice was low and musical as meadow stream.
A holy spirit from a better land.

A mother stooping to her grave, beside
A little brother, were all her kin on earth.
Day by day she patiently toil'd and hoped,
And bore her earnings to the humble home
Where watch'd the little boy by mother's bed :
And she, with a noble pride, conceal'd
Her toil and poverty in the city's heart,
And kept her fair and neat, and so was call'd
The fairest and loveliest in all the land.

Sometimes when toil was done and mother slept,
She would with brother walk out in the eve,
And talk of pleasant things and hopes that he
Might have in manhood some holy recollections
To lean upon when weary in life's battle.

'Twas thus they met, pass'd, and so met again,
A fair and fine appearing man who came
To speak at last, when they met in their walk,
Of passing things: and he sometimes linger'd
At the gate, and seem'd so pure and courteous
And intelligent in his talk and manner,
That she was almost sad when toil would keep
Her bent and weary from the pleasant walk.
Leaning a time beside the gate, playful like,
He told the girl his name and birth; as fair
As any in the land. Then she with firm
Respect, although it almost broke her heart,
Did bid the man a cold good-night, and pray'd,
At least she tried to pray, that she should
Never see his face again; for knowing him
So much above her birth, she foretime felt
The pain of looking up to a hopeless
Though a holy love. But he would not
Be so denied, but gently, step by step,
Did come to cross the threshold, sit beside
The mother's bed, and talk in kind encouragement.
Then he sent a learn'd and skilful man,

And was so truly kind, that when the mother,
Almost heal'd, arose, she did reproach herself
That she had been so cold and so suspicious.
Then as in gentle penance for her wrong,
She secret pray'd a blessing on his head.
And when one day in sport he gave the boy
Some shining coins, not counting of their worth,
She went aside and wept in sweet delight,
For every piece brought a reprieve from weary toil
That wore her day by day into the dust.
Well, so the season sped along, till they
Did walk by side upon the lawn, and there
Beneath some ancient elm-trees alone
In the shadow of the moon he talk'd
Of love, and ask'd if she could love but him
And believe in him alone ; as if
'Twere possible the girl could ever love another.
She wept and bade him go, firmly as she could,
Although it crush'd her warm and noble heart
To even think to deny herself his presence.
Then when he would not go, she told him all,
All her poverty, her struggles and her pride,

She kindly thank'd him for all he'd done
And bade a last goodbye and turn'd her home.
He clasp'd her in his arms and in the soft
September balm he forced a kiss upon
Her ruby lips that set her blood a-flame
With love and hot tumultuous passion.
"Come on adown the dewy path of pleasure,
'Tis Nature calls to us, and Nature
Never errs. 'Tis but a present consummation
Of the delicious bliss of all true love.
And this I swear by all that's good shall be
Eternal as the burning stars above us.
Come, 'twill be a jewel precious, wrung
From the illiberal hand of love—a surety
Made sure against a treacherous fate ;
Give me but this assurance of your love,
This sweet reward for all my patient waiting."
She would have fled, but when he reproved
And call'd her truth ingratitude, she thought
Of home, of want, of—she knew not what,
Then in an impulse and passion—fell.

He met her at the gate next eve, not sad
Like her, but as to pluck her cheek in sport ;
But it was red and flush'd, and wet with tears.
And so he went chuckling on his triumph,
Whistling down the lawn without a thought.
The mother died. The daughter droop'd and sank
Beneath her shame, and want, and cold reproach ;
But he, her gay destroyer, was fawn'd upon,
And flatter'd, and welcomed everywhere.

A young and unskill'd man, a fitter
Poet than advocate, with more of genius
Than judgment, counsell'd to bring an action ;
And she half crazed, believing the simple truth
Would all be told in court, and something thus
Of her crushing wrong clear'd up, consented.
But he was rich in gold and friends, and when
The time came round, was flank'd with counsel old
And learn'd, and wise, and skill'd in villany,
While she all friendless did sit beside
This one young advocate for slaughter.
Then there arose these grey and wise old men,

These leaders in the first profession of the earth ;
And before the assembled court did pour
On the head of this friendless, weeping child
Invectives sharp and insults broad and coarse,
Until the mob did jeer, and howl, and hiss at her,
And the powder'd judge upon his bench
Did shake and have to bite his lip, as if to crush
A smile, and so the bribed and rotten jury
At once declared him free of cost or crime.
Some caught the wretch up in their arms for joy,
While she all shunn'd, white as a ghost, look'd up
And said, “ Is there a God ? ” then fell as dead.

The winter tide was warm that night to her
Compared to the reproachful world, and so
She made her bed therein. A mighty wave
Did swirl high up, and cast her spotless soul
Upon the shining shore of her eternal home.

The tale is not all told — is not all known.
A bright-eyed brave young brother lives,
And is a shadow to that smiling wretch,

That will pursue him to a gory shroud.
Thus much I saw in the current of your stream
Of social life, then struck out for the shore,
Sadden'd, pain'd, and deeply disappointed.

SANTONA.

And had I been there in that throng'd court,
Know you what I had done ?

LUCUS.

Why, wept as did I when she told her tale.

SANTONA.

Wept ! Oh, I am out of patience with you !
This nursing a gushing heart of sentiment
Does bring contempt on half the schemes of life.
Tears are a woman's weapons, sorry things
Even in her, but in man most despicable.
What ! lie down and be rode upon rough shod ?
No ! face and fight, and be at least respected.
The lion is not a comely beast, but brave,
And is therefore revered above all beasts,

And bravest of the brave, is chosen king.
God and his angels fought for heaven ;
Christ did beat with thongs the money changers ;
And the chosen Peter wore a most willing sword.
The elements war through all the year ;
Spring and Winter battle for the mastery ;
Autumn time and Winter struggle on the heath,
And I have seen them wrestle in the woods
Until the yellow leaves were all awhirl
And sighs and groans went up and down the hills.
No ! I would have leapt on the fine occasion,
I would have seized the reins of opportunity ;
I would have pour'd a flood of scorian fire
On the heads of the grey and shameless counsel ;
I would have glow'd and thaw'd all hearts like
snow ;
I would have hew'd the villain inch by inch
To death, and deluged the court with tears,
Made others weep, but stood myself unmoved,
Like some proud rock in a mobile sea ;
I would have won me such a fame that I
For years had fed my starved ambition on.

LUCUS.

And so been there to triumph for yourself,
Instead of for the right and innocence ?

SANTONA.

You seek the impossible—ask good unmix'd.
Here the kernel and the chaff all blend,
And good and evil intertwine. Hereafter
Only—if hereafter is—the segregation.
Even Christ, near two thousand years ago,
Did find a traitor in his chosen twelve.

LUCUS.

So, not content to doubt and war with this,
You dare to doubt the truth of the world to come ?

SANTONA.

If the fairest thing that lives—grander in your
Eyes than earth, more to you than your Creator—
Had told you face to face sweet lovely lies,
Would you not sometimes doubt unlanguage'd
nature ?

Sometimes doubt that vague and shadowy future
Of which our hope and yearning that it is

Is our strongest evidence and ground of faith ?
And yet I do not wholly disbelieve that I
Shall live hereafter. But I do trample on
The thought that all do begin the after world
A fair and even race as we have here.

This is the beginning of the course, and here
'Tis given all to look earthward or look up,
To grovel in the earth and be a brute,
Or, aspiring upward, grow to be a god.
And then, again, I have a thought that we
Can never die till we have made ourselves
By our lives complete and ripe for death.
That it being, in our choice to beautify
Or to defile the soul, soon as the first
Is fully done, the lofty soul is call'd,
As to a higher school ; and that the ill
Disposed will perish too, but perish utterly,
Soon as they reach a certain way in their
Descent, and bear enough of slimy sin
To sink them down beyond the resurrection.
And that only they do linger long who
Wander up and down and halt between.

LAMONTE.

Lucus, leave the answer to my guest to me.
I'll not answer now, but summon to yon
Umbrageous court to give in evidence,
Where sleep the monarchs of a thousand storms,
For ever still in shrouds of colour'd moss,
While green vines twine a pretty wreath above,
As decorating graves of dear and gallant dead,
The yew, in cloak of everlasting green,
Does sweep her pretty palms in winning eloquence,
While scarlet berries bead her lisping boughs
Like threaded drops of rainbow-painted dew,
Or pearls upon an Indian maiden's limbs.
Reposing there on couch of mossy carpet,
Where green is wove with yellow moss,
And yellow wove with green, all undisturbed
By sight or sound save birds of sweetest song,
While the mighty trees above receive the red
And hot darts of the sun on bearded helmets,
There will come to you the higher evidence,
Stronger a thousand fold and more convincing
Than if produced by oath of all mankind.

SANTONA.

And dream? Why, I have done as much a boy,
Laid on my back a-peering through the chestnuts.
Oh, I would give the green leaves of my life
For something grand and real—some undream'd
deeds,
To wear a mantle, broad and richly jewell'd
As purple heaven fringed with gold at sunset,
To wear a crown as dazzling as the sun,
And holding a sceptre lightning charged,
Stride among the stars as I have strode
A barefoot boy among the buttercups.

LAMONTE.

There is that in you that draws my soul to yours,
Your head I fear but not your heart, is wrong.
With me in my untraversed wilds and caves,
My kingdom unexplored, you will read the book
Of nature that unclasped lies while the winds
Soft and mesmeric as the fingers of your love,
Will turn the living leaves as you read on—
Will paint in lambent-amber hues and Tyrian,

And strike in plaintive mellow tone a harp
That hangs in the lightning shiver'd pine,
And reading, we will be the happier and better.
Nature will look mightier yet milder there,
Because we will be nearer to her face.

SANTONA.

And if I should, what then ? What though I
met

My Maker face to face, as in the Mount of old ?
Mountain bound in an island in the clouds,
What fame or fortune could betide me there ?
I had as well to know death's secrets,
Or hold the keys of Cæsar's coffers,
And be for ever forbid their use.

LAMONTE.

Why no ! You'd gather up pure gems of thought,
Or catch bright fancies one by one that flit
You by like beauteous orient birds, and cage
Them up between a precious volume's lids ;
Or like one that gathers gold from out the sand,

A little here, a little there, then all
Mould in one bright and shining shield, and so
Bearing it aloft, descend upon the world
Like some proud conqueror of olden time.
Or shine forth in the newness of your thought,
Like some bright lovely star that hastens forth
Before its fellows, chasing the sullen sun,
And so be seen and known of all the world.

SANTONA.

What is there new atop of this old world ?
Should e'er I come to write again, why I
Would search among the quaint and dusted tomes,
While the selfish world sought pleasure and repose,
And shoddy did the Europe tour up,
Much as a blockhead schoolboy does a task.
While men well skill'd in sales of soap and lard,
And learn'd in all the art of packing pork,
Would coarsely tramp the sacred dust, that deeds,
When earth was young, have made immortal,
(Where I would softly tread unshod and bared),
I'd pick up here and there from dusty masters

The ancient coins of loftiest, noblest thought,
And cast them in one shining shield of bronze,
And bearing it aloft high heralded,
Flank'd with sheets of flaming advertisements,
Be call'd a bard of new inspired song.

But I have tried this inky road to fame
And fail'd with this experience for my pains.
I'd throttle modest mien and word in this
Swift age, as I would traducers of my fame.
I would plant a preface a-front my book
As you would plant a battery in war,
And bearing down all things that dared oppose,
With shout and flourish take the world by storm.

Or at the least I'd hold a touching tale
Before my book as you would hold a shield,
And with it catch or turn aside the darts
And poison'd shafts of killing criticism.

But mind you, fame is not now won with ink,
The author's pen's a lever used to lift up others ;
Blood is red and readier seen from far,
And gold, like some bright star's at once beheld
By all the world in the darkest day,

And instant wins the worship of the mob.
The world has turn'd shopkeeper, go sell, sell ;
Put a costly price on yourself to sell ;
Customers with cash do never buy cheap goods ;
The mob has now got hold the money bags
And skilful judges of pork or cabbage
Do judge of men by their name and arrogance.
Assume a lofty air and sounding name,
The barefaced fools outnumber and outshout
The men of sense and solid worth and thought.
The gilded chisell'd bottles that encase
Most stupid, sad and unhealthy wines,
Are pluck'd at once by the money mob,
While the plain but precious bottled liquor
Accumulates the dust of generations.

Go buy and sell. Get gold. A golden lever
Moves more than the Syracusan could have
moved.

Deceit brings wealth, wealth buys the bubble
fame,
And fame lulls the fever of the soul and makes

Us feel that we have grasp'd an immortality.
Oh, I have mock'd at man and shook with mirth.
Yet in all there's a sort of savage justice.
Did you never observe with what an odd
Yet an impartial hand are things divided ?
The fool has fortunes thrust upon him, while
The man of brains is pinch'd with penury.
The dolt who can feel as much of sentiment
As a milch cow feeding on her swill,
Goes on serene through sweetest smelling
meads,
With maidens fainting for a breath of love,
While he of finest sense is cast by fate,
Like some sea waif upon the coarse frontier.
The prettiest maiden is a screeching parrot,
While she of wit is shorn of all of beauty,
The gifted man is stoop'd and sallow pale,
The ass stands six feet up of lovely flesh,
Wisdom means age and gout and ugliness,
While the foolish boy has health and beauty.
The head of wit and wisdom's shorn of hair,
And the rich man begs the beggar's stomach.

LAMONTE.

Strange friend, you now do need repose. In yond
Grand peaks that start like rolling thunder clouds,
So dark and tall they rear their sullen fronts,
I would be proud to welcome you my guest,
The first pale face that ever cross'd my threshold ;
And when your fever'd mind has had repose,
You will be more yourself and say gentler things.
Beware ambition ! A fierce and rugged route
Beset with treachery and fearful falls ;
I am your elder, I have trod a little way.

SANTONA.

Listen ! I will tell a chapter of my life,
And then, if you can find aught else for me
To choose in all the burnt and barren path,
Why, I will lamb-like follow your dictates,
Till my feet are thin and naked as my palms.
I had but two thoughts—two passions even
In the morning twilight of my life.
Love, gentle, patient, lute-voiced love,
And proud, lofty, and laudable ambition.

I loved her ! Oh, if love was e'er a flame,
Then that did burn perpetual in my breast,
An altar, my heart offering, soul incense.
Was it my fault that I was born only with
These two thoughts, or hopes, or plans, or passions ?
The one a gentle, pure and abiding love,
The one a towering and grand ambition ?
Mine was a broad and universal love
That burn'd and beam'd a far and tender light ;
And she its focus caught all, and centred
All its warm and glowing rays on her.
I had seen some of sweet sunshiny life,
But more, far more of manly strife and struggle ;
But I had not that sweet and glittering bait
That woos and traps a gentle woman's heart.
A gold lined wretch, too contemptible for death,
Became the chosen suitor of her hand ;
Then she, as if to mock me, sought me out,
And sheltering herself behind a plea
Of meek obedience to parental will,
Did, in a stately and patronizing way,
Wish me on well in all my noble plans

And promises and lofty aspirations ;
Then stoop as if in sympathy to stroke
My blanch'd and bloodless corpse-like cheek.
My heart up to that day had held two flames,
That burn'd, two conflagrations in a town,
But then and there they blended into one,
Ambition did absorb all else, and love,
My love so tall and fair and gently rear'd,
With no thing earthly left to feed upon,
Did die so dead, so utterly and entire,
It did not leave a trace or recollection.
Ambition usurps the places where it grew,
And but one thought, one passion, ah ! one flame
Licks out its forked tongue to heaven.
Oh, I will win a laurel wreath of fame,
Though it be wet with blood and bitter tears,
If but to cast it down a reptile fang'd,
And coil'd up in her gay and flowery path,
To strike its fangs for ever in her peace.

LAMONTE.

Give me your hand, your right in this my left,

Its blood comes nearer from the heart, and then
My right is dead, deader than this your love ;
For love, like Lazarus, can only sleep,
But, breathed upon by love and hope, will
Rise a loftier and a holier love.
I know you now, I am an elder brother,
Sorrow and deceit hath made us kin.
From want and disappointment, bitter breasts,
We two have drawn our stormy natures.

*A young HUNTER descends the mountain and
approaches.*

SANTONA.

Ho ! whom have we here ? talk of the devil,
And he is at hand ; who are you and whence ?

MINSTREL.

I am a poet and dwell down by the sea.

SANTONA.

Poet, poet ! fool, forsooth ! Hungry fool !
Would you know what it means to be a poet ?
It is to want a friend, to want a home,

A country, money,—ay, to want a meal.
It is not wise to be a poet now,
For the world has so fine and modest grown,
It will not praise a poet to his face,
But waits till he is dead some hundred years,
Then uprears marbles cold and stupid as itself.

But rest you here, and while the red-hot sun
Wheels on, and sleep my friends beneath the
boughs,
Do pray beguile the hour with a song.

MINSTREL.

You sit before me here to-night,
But not beside me, not beside—
Are beautiful, but not a bride.
Some things I recollect aright,
Though full a dozen years are done
Since we two met one winter night—
Since I was crush'd as by a fall ;
For I have watch'd and pray'd through all
The shining circles of the sun.
I saw you 'mid the bright and brave—

I sought you in a dewy eve,
When shining crickets trill and grieve.
You smiled, and I became a slave.
A slave ! I worshipp'd you at night,
When all the blue field blossom'd red
With dewy roses overhead
In sweet and delicate delight.
I was devout. I knelt at night—
I knelt at noon and tried to pray
To Him who doeth all things well.
I tried in vain to break the spell ;
My prison'd soul refused to rise
And image saints in Paradise
While one was here before my eyes.
You came between alway, alway.
The moon was white, the stars a-chill—
A frost fell on a soul that night,
And lips were whiter, colder still.
A soul was black that erst was white.
And you forget the place—the night !
Forget that aught was done or said—
Say this has pass'd a long decade—

Say not a single tear was shed—
Say you forget these little things !
Is not your recollection loth ?
Well, little bees have bitter stings,
And I remember for us both.

No, not a tear. Do men complain ?
The outer wound will show a stain,
And we may shriek at idle pain ;
But pierce the heart, and not a word
Or wail, or sign, is seen or heard.

I did not blame—I do not blame.
My wild heart turns to you the same,
Such as it is ; but O, its meed
Of faithfulness and trust and truth,
And gushing confidence of youth
I caution you, is small indeed.

I follow'd you—I worshipp'd you,
And I would follow—worship still ;
But if I felt the blight and chill
Of frosts in my uncheerful spring,

And show it now in riper years
In answer to this love you bring—
In answer to this second love—
This wail of an unmated dove,
In cautious answer to your tears,
You, you know who taught me disdain !
But deem you I would deal you pain ?
I joy to know your heart is light,
I journey glad to know it thus,
And could I dare to make it less ?
Yours—you are day, but I am night.
God knows I would descend to-day
Devoutly on my knees and pray
Your way might be one path of peace
And perfect bliss through roses fair ;
But know you, back—one long decade,
How fervently, how fond I pray'd ?
What was the answer to that prayer ?

The tale is old and often told
And lived by more than you suppose,
The fragrance of a summer rose

Press'd down beneath the stubborn lid,
When sun and song are hush'd and hid,
And summer days are grey and old.

We parted so. Amid the bays
And peaceful palms and song and shade
Your cheerful feet in pleasure stray'd
Through all the swift and shining days.

You made my way another way,
You bade it should not be with thine—
A fierce and cheerless route was mine ;
But we have met, at last, to-day.
You talk of tears—of bitter tears,
And tell of tyranny and wrong,
And I re-live some stinging jeers,
Back, far back, in the leaden years.
A lane without a turn is long,
I muse, and whistle a reply—
Then bite my lips to crush a sigh.

You sympathize that I am sad—
I sigh for you that you complain—

I shake my yellow hair in vain—
I laugh with lips but am not glad.

SANTONA.

Hold ! hold ! hold your tongue and hold my
aching head !

'Tis well for you the Roman mob is dead.

This stuff of yours is as full of pompous I's
As a candidate for Congress is of lies.

Why talk so loudly of yourself at large ?

Your neighbours do that for you, free of charge !

This poetry's not of the heart, but stomach.

Not your sentiment, but your indigestion

Disturbs the balance-wheel which rules your brain.

Love your food the less—respect your stomach
more,

For more have groan'd and died from over use
Of knives and forks than ever fell in war
By bloody sword and bayonet and ball.

[*The MINSTREL rises and moves away.*

SANTONA.

Why, what's the haste? You'll reach there
soon enough.

MINSTREL.

Reach where?

SANTONA.

The Inn to which all earthly roads do tend;
The "neat apartments furnish'd—see within;"
The "furnish'd rooms for quiet single gentlemen."
The narrow six-by-two where you will lie
With cold blue nose pointing up to the grass,
Labell'd, box'd, and ready all for shipment.
'Twas said of old that all roads led to Rome,
But all roads now do lead to this small Inn.
'Tis just so many miles ahead of you;
Why, then, haste to do the miles that lie between?

SCENE IV.

LAMONTE's *Camp Fire in the Mountains.*

SANTONA, LAMONTE, the MINSTREL, and others, seated around, smoking and telling tales of home and how they came to take to the Mountains.

MOUNTAIN JOE, a small grey Frenchman, rising and gesticulating excitedly, ends a tale thus:—

* * * *

Alas the sight I saw that night !

Alas that I should tremble here !

I know 'tis not a coward fear,

And yet I shiver as in fright.

O mosses stream you down and down,

And trail you to the dewy ground,

And green boughs gird me round and round,

And keen and green quills of the pine

O bristle like the porcupine,

And maples reaching as for alms

Your broad and many finger'd palms,

Fold me, hold me, clasp me tight,

As ever mother held a child,

And shut out sense and sound and light,

For I am wild, O I am wild.
The blue fields blossom'd yellow bloom
Of brilliants set in purple gloom,
A silver shield slid on and on
Between me and the better land,
And I was glad. I kiss'd my hand
To melting stars and mellow moon,
And sought the peerless paragon.
I sought her, thought her mine, my own—
I sought her as I would be sought
With boundless faith and beating heart
Fill'd full of sweet uncertainties
Among the moonlit fruited trees.

Alas the sight I saw that night
Through striped bars of streaming light
And boughs that whisper'd plaintively
In solemn sympathy with me !
A red dead leaf was in her hair,
Full half a swelling breast was bare
And mad disorder everywhere.
And gliding through a thorny brake
And sliding like a slimy snake

I saw him stooping steal away
Like serpent caught in Paradise
That hid it from the light of day
With guilty and unholy eyes.

I saw a sight that night, that night,
Because I could not help but see—
Because the moon was bleach'd so white—
Because the stars were yellow light—
Because they blossom'd in a tree
And dropp'd the blossoms on the grass—
And saw because, alas, alas,
An evil spirit guided me.

He was my friend. He ate my bread,
He counsell'd very wise and well,
“ I love you more than words can tell ”
He many and many a time had said.
He suck'd the juices from the fruit
And left for me the bitter rind.
I am not crazed—it was unkind
To suck the sweetness from my fruit
And give me back the bitter rind.

And did I curse or crush or kill ?
Go down to yonder wooded gate,
Go down, go down, it groweth late ;
You hesitate and hesitate
And tremble as if in a chill.

It open'd very wide that night,
For two went through—but one return'd—
And when its rusty hinges turn'd
They creak'd as if in pain or fright.

Three finger prints are on the bar—
Three finger prints of purple gore.
You scan my hand—here, scan it more,
And count my fingers o'er and o'er,
You cannot see a sign of gore.
I lost one finger in the war,
And is it not an honour'd scar ?

SANTONA.

Come, Lucus, take the stand and be cross ques-
tion'd,
Fair-hair'd, sad and sentimental Lucus ;

A frank confession is good for the soul,
Tell your experience like a Christian.

LUCUS.

She was not tall, nor was she wondrous fair,
But there was in her proud and glorious eyes
A charm—a wonder—a dangerous witchery ;
And when they still and steady look'd in yours
With a look of trust, as asking sympathy—
As talking with your soul in confidence—
While her rich, full, pouting, lovely lips
Kept forth their blended sentiment and mirth,
(A battery mask'd behind a cataract
Of restless auburn curls that pour'd
About a brow of more than woman-beauty),
You had been less a man than I should like
To know much of, if you had been unmoved.

Where the pine tops toss the curly clouds
And shake them from their plumes like thistle down,
Far, far adown a rugged mountain gorge
That seem'd as 'twere the half oped lips of earth,

Where hardy miners wrought out precious gold
She dwelt with her fond and faithful mother.
And these brave, bearded mountain men, so true
The grandest men—the giants of the age—
Did almost bless the earth she walk'd upon,
And call her purer than their virgin gold.

Sometimes along the mountain trail that wound
Above the miners mining at the sluice,
The cheery girl would pass and playful call
To each a word of kind encouragement,
Then wake the echoes of the woods afar
With gushing laugh at their honest answers,
And passing on would leave a blaze of light.
They blessing her at heart, would put aside
Their coarser thoughts, and bending to their toil,
Recall some fairy form in another land,
And be the happier and better for her smiles
Through many and many a weary day.

In the shadows of the sunset mountains
Where the giants of olden time had dwelt

And built them monuments and castle walls
And rear'd up pillars that pierced the sky,
A student dwelt—a student of the book
Of Nature—a lover of the beautiful—
A lover of the grand and beautiful—
Devoutest lover of the true and beautiful,
With a heart all passion and all impulse—
Who believed in love as he believed in God.
A dreamer while the waken'd world went on—
An Indian summer of the sullen year.
And he sang wild songs like the wild, wild wind—
Was wayward as the swaying pines, and yet
As fix'd in truth as they were in the earth.
Her worth and fame had come to him in dreams.
He had stood afar and look'd on her entranced.
He heard her song on the billowy wind.
Her name—in other names—was in all his songs.
He enshrined her image for ever in his heart,
And, saint-like, deem'd her too sacred for his
touch.

He had ambition—that bane of pleasure—

And purposed in his soul the loftiest things ;
But made no mates and courted no companions.
No one loved him. No one did know him.
They mistook his love of Nature's beauty
And solitary walks through the pines and palms
For studied hatred and contempt of men,
And thought him proud and cold and heartless.
Mount Hood is cold and stately to look upon,
But his heart is of lava and molten gold.
Little to do with man—less with woman.
Woman's ways were to him as a fountain seal'd ;
What wonder, then, that when this beauty smiled
His heart did worship as it worshipp'd God,
And pour all his lofty love of nature
On her in the holiest adoration.

He came to her to fall like a forest pine,
Caught in the embrace of a mountain storm.
He forgot his songs, his crags, his tangled woods
He nearly forgot his God in his consuming love ;
And when he turn'd him homeward with a pledge
The holiest that love can give its lover,

The mountain route was as with roses strewn.
Can love then be an unholy thing,
To make us better and so supremely blest ?

Then came a message across the mountain,
As kind, as wooing as words could utter,
Bidding him on a time to return to her.
He crazed with impatience at the hours,
He flew in the face of old creeping Time.
He would have fought the hours that stood between
Him and the time he should see her face,
One by one, as you would fight a foeman,
Had they been animate and sensate things.

At last the day—the hour came rushing past,
When Mars was trailing his lance on the peaks ;
He rein'd his foamy steed and look'd down
To where she dwelt, with a bounding heart.
He kiss'd his hand to the smoke that curl'd,
Then bow'd his head in devoutest thanks.
His spotted steed did plunge and fret the while
Beneath his gay and silken fringed carona,
And toss his neck and banner'd mane, and then,

Away, adown the mountain's stony steep
He dash'd with a wild impatience.

A coldness met him, like a cavern's breath,
As he hasten'd across the threshold.
She came and coldly spoke, and scornfully,
In answer to his warm impulsive words.
All things assumed a hateful hue, and life
Seem'd but a cruel jest to be endured,
He trembling dared to ask a reason why ;
She answer'd with a singular indifference,
And bade him go on through all his life alone.

Sterner he stood than he had seem'd before,
And gazed intently through the casement
For a time as if warring with himself,
Then crushing down the welling bitterness,
He wrapp'd himself in sullen silentness
And turn'd for ever from her presence :
Bearing his great sorrow like a burthen—
Like a black night-mare muffled in his heart.
With his faith in the truth of woman shatter'd

Like a vase of porcelain dash'd to pieces
From its marble mantel, on the hearth below.
He heard a mocking laugh as he turn'd away,
And vaulting in his saddle, took his course
Through the densest wood by the darkest path,
As the thing best fitting to his fate and mood,
But, Parthian-like, hurl'd a curse back as he fled.

* * * * *

Then came another—one of the busy world—
A soldier, with sword and accoutrements of war—
With epaulets and polish'd uniform—
With talk of camp and braggart battle talk—
With ready talk and gossip of the world
That wins a woman's willing ear withal,
And won this jewel from the mountain mine ;
Not once counting, not once dreaming of its worth,
In truth, not having a soul enough refined
To realize its worth had he been told.

* * * * *

Mid the Theban pillars where Pindar sang,
Breathing the soft sea winds of the Isles of Greece,
Breathing spice of myrtle, breathing olive blooms,

Counting the caravans of snowy clouds
Through boughs above him that wrapp'd the ruins,
Our student rested from the tropic sun.
He had trod the dust where the Cæsars dwelt,
Where Brutus bled, and where Pompey fell ;
Yet counted it all but a weary work.
The Mecca of his heart was a miner's camp,
Banner'd alone by the eternal pines.

There drifted a waif to the stranger here,
A journal of his language and his land,
And as the sun went down on the Morea,
He read the plaintive lines that I read below.
He knew that that wail was from her he loved,
In a mountain wild of the western world,
But it spoke no love—no sympathy for him—
A dark sea roll'd eternally between.
He had learn'd, as 'twere, to love his sorrow ;
It had become an element of his being.
He dwelt in the land of departed fame,
Dwelt in mossy ruins, where Marius sat,
Grey with the ghosts of their departed Kings.

He read, and read again, and then he said—
“Strangely beautiful is the faith of Islam—
Strangely wooing are the worlds above us—
Strange are the secrets of life and of death—
Strange are Orient tales told by the Arabs—
Strange are Northern lights in a darken’d land—
Strange are streams and rivers that course the seas—
Strange and wayward is the course of love,
But strangest of all are the ways of woman.”

So here at last we bury our love—

This red seal fastens the coffin’s lid ;
The clerk below and the court above
Pronounce it dead—let the corpse be hid ;
For I, who never have cross’d your will,
Consented—that you might have it still.

I make no moan, but steady and calm

As the Sphinx I gaze on the desert ahead.
No wooing of word—no pressing of palm,
No sealing of love with lips seal red.
Who shall account for the love that’s lost ?
Who shall account for the tears it cost ?

Some columns alone in a desert sand—

Some moss'd and mystical pyramids—

Some desolate palms on either hand,

Water'd alone by my weeping lids,

Are all that my life has realized,

Of all I cherish'd, and all I prized ;

Of all I dream'd and pictured in youth,

Of love by streams and beautiful bays,

While my heart cherish'd its type of truth,

Through all the tropical golden days,

While you as the oak, and I as the vine,

Clung palm in palm through sheen or shine.

Some time when your sky is dark overhead,

('Tis a desolate sky that has never a cloud,)

You may muse for a time on this love that is dead—

Muse calm, being neither so young nor so proud,

And will say, Well at last it has come home to me,

That no one was ever so faithful as she.

It may be I loved you not overly much,

But I had enlisted for the end of the war—

Till we the sounding sea shore should touch—
Beyond Atlanta—be it near or far—
And a faithfuller soldier never yet
Bore shining sword or the bayonet.

Which is the brighter now, ink or blood ?

Which is the keener now, sword or pen ?
Time will reveal the ill or the good
Of each, and I bide my time 'till then,
And will carve with my pen a name to shine
Brighter than ever was blade of thine.

SANTONA.

Why, there is a woman in every case !
Most valiant men to be driven from your homes
Into the hills by the fluttering of a frock !
But where's old Blacksnae Bill of Taos Town ?
Ten to one there is no woman in his tale,
And a score to one she did not jilt him
If there is, as she did you others here.
Say where's your thoughts to-night, as you lounge
there
Upon your elbow, peering into the fire ?

BLACKSNAKE BILL still peering into the fire, and speaking in a low tone as if to himself.

Back, backward to-night is mem'ry traversing,
Over the desert my weary feet travell'd,
Thick with the wreck of my dear heart-idols
And toppled columns of my ambition—
Red with the best of my hot heart's purple.

And this is all of the sweet life she promised ;
And this is all of the fair life I painted !
Dead, ashen fruit, of the Dead Sea border !
Ah yes, and worse by a thousand numbers,
Since that can be cast away at willing,
While desolate life with its dead hope buried
Clings on to the clay, though the soul despise it.

Down under the hill and under the fir-tree
By the spring, and looking far out in the valley,
She stands as she stood in the glorious Olden,
Swinging her hat in her right hand dimpled.
The other hand toys with a honey-suckle

That has tiptoed up and tried to kiss her.
Her dark hair is twining her neck and her temples
Like tendrils some beautiful Parian marble.

“O eyes of lustre and love and passion !
O radiant face with the sea-shell tinted !
White cloud with the sunbeams tangled in it !”
I cried, as I stood in the dust beneath her,
And gazed on the god my boyheart worshipp'd
With a love and a passion, a part of madness.
“Dreamer,” she said, and a tinge of displeasure
Swept over her face that I should disturb her,
“All of the fair world is spread out before you ;
Go down and possess it with love and devotion,
And heart ever tender and touching as woman's,
And life shall be sweet as the first kiss of morning.”

I turn'd down the pathway, blinded no longer ;
Another was coming, tall, manly, and bearded.
I built me a shrine in the innermost temple—
In the innermost rim of the red pulsing heart,
And placed her therein, sole possessor and priestess,

And carved all her words on the walls of my heart.
They say that he woo'd her there under the fir-tree
And won her one eve, when the katydids mock'd
her.

Well, he may have a maiden and call her Merinda;
But mine is the one that stands there for ever
Leisurely swinging her hat by the ribbons.

They say she is wedded. No, not my Merinda,
For mine stands for ever there under the fir-tree
Gazing and swinging her hat by the ribbons.
They tell me her children reach up to my shoulder.
'Tis false. I did see her down under the fir-tree
When the stars were all busy a-weaving thin laces
Out of their gold and the moon's yellow tresses,
Swinging her hat as in days of the Olden.
True, I didn't speak to or venture to touch her—
Touch her ! I sooner would pluck the sweet Mary,
The mother of Jesus, from arms of the priesthood
As they kneel at the altar in holy devotion.

*

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*

*

And was it for this that my heart was kept tender ?
Fashion'd from thine, O sacristan maiden !—
That coarse men could pierce my warm heart to
the purple ?
That vandals could enter and burn out its fresh-
ness ?
That rude men could trample it into the ashes ?
O was it for this that my heart was kept open ?
I look'd in a glass, not the heart of my fellow,
Whose was the white soul I saw there reflecting ?
But trample the grape that the wine may flow
freely !

Beautiful priestess, be with me for ever !
You still are secure. They know not your temple,
They never can find it, or pierce it, or touch it,
Because in their hearts they know no such a
temple.

I turn'd my back on them like Enos the Trojan,
Much indeed leaving in dark desolation,
But bearing one treasure alone that is dearer
Than all they possess or have fiercely torn from
me :

A maiden that stands looking far down the valley
Swinging her hat by its long purple ribbons.

SANTONA.

Rhyme and reason crucified with truth atween,
Oh these ugly peaks and doubtful mountain maids !
Let's have no more of either told to-night.
But for manner's sake I had been sound asleep.
But where's this youthful, roving, bard of ours ?
Here, you at least can give us jingling rhymes.
So come you now, something you have seen afar—
Far from this, and free from sentimental maids.

MINSTREL.

I linger in the autumn noon,
I listen to the partridge call
I watch the yellow leaflets fall
And drift adown the dimpled Doon.
I lean me o'er the ivy grown
“Auld brig,” where vandal tourists’ tools
Have ribb’d out names that would be known,
Are known—known as a herd of fools.

Behind Ailsa the sun declines
With lances levell'd here and there—
The tinted thorns, the trailing vines—
O braes of Doon ! so fair ! so fond !
The Poet's place of birth beyond,
Beyond the mellow bells of Ayr.
I look the way the witches came—
The poet's monument aflame
In nest of ivied oak and bay,
Then gloomy gabled Alloway—
I hear the milk-maid's twilight song
Come bravely through the storm-bent oaks ;
Beyond the white surf's sullen strokes
Beat in a chorus deep and strong.
I hear the sounding forge afar,
And rush and rumbling of the car,
The steady tinkle of the bell
Of lazy, laden home-bound cows
That stop to bellow and to browse,
And I would now arouse—arise.
I count the red lights in the skies ;
I yield as to a fairy spell.

Heard ye the feet of flying horse ?
Heard ye the boggles in the air
That clutch at Tam O' Shanter's mare,
That flies this mossy brig across ?

O Burns ! where bid ? where bide you now ?
Where are you in this night's full noon ?
Might you not on yon slanting beam
Of moonlight, kneeling to the Doon,
Descend once to this hallow'd stream,
Great master of the pen and plough ?
Sure yon stars yield enough of light
For heaven to spare your face one night.

O Burns ! another name for song,
Another name for passion—pride ;
For love and poesy allied ;
For strangely blended right and wrong.

I picture you as one who kneel'd
A stranger at his own hearthstone ;
One knowing all, yet all unknown,

One seeing all, yet all conceal'd ;
The fitful years you linger'd here,
A lease of peril and of pain ;
And I am thankful yet again,
The gods did love thee, ploughman ! peer !

In all thine own and other lands,
I hear thy touching songs of cheer ;
The peasant and the lordly peer . . .
Above thine honour'd dust strike hands.
A touch of tenderness is shown
In this unselfish love of Ayr,
And it is well—you earn'd it fair
For all unhelmeted—alone
You stood the champion of the serf,
And proved a ploughman's honest claim
To battle in the lists of fame ;
A pen-arm'd Bruce on Scotia's turf ;
You earn'd it as a warrior earns
His laurels fighting for his land,
And died—it was your right to go.
O eloquence of silent woe !

The Master leaning reach'd a hand,
And whisper'd, "It is finish'd, Burns!"

* * * *

O cold and cruel Nottingham !
In disappointment and in tears,
Sad, lost, and lonely here I am
To question is this Nottingham,
Of which I dream'd for years and years ?
I seek in vain for name or sign
Of him who made this mould a shrine,
A Mecca to the fair and fond
Beyond the seas, and still beyond.

Where white clouds crush their drooping wings
Against the snow-crown'd battlements,
And peaks that flash like silver tents,
Where Sacramento's fountain springs,
And proud Columbia frets his shore
Of sombre boundless wood and wold,
And lifts his yellow sands of gold
In plaintive murmurs evermore ;

And snowy dimpled Tahoe smiles,
And where white breakers from the sea,
In solid phalanx knee to knee,
Surround the calm Pacific Isles,
Then run and reach unto the land
In voice of pain with pallid hand,
And spread their thin palms on the sand.
Is he supreme—there understood.
The free can understand the free,
The brave and good, the brave and good.

Yea, he did sin ; who hath reveal'd
That he was more than man, or less ?
He sinn'd no more, but less conceal'd
Than they who cloak'd their follies o'er,
And then cast stones in his distress ;
He scorn'd to make the good seem more,
Or make the bitter sin seem less.
Yet shall we mate the barb and ass,
Or judge the wit and dolt the same,
While one has heart and soul aflame ?
While one nor pride nor passion has ?

Yet so it is, the ancient maid,
With blood as cold as slimy toad,
Cries, "I am pure, am not afraid
That I shall fall beneath my load
Of flesh, as yon hot-blooded girl,
With pouting lips and teeth of pearl ;
Lo ! I am pure for forty years,
She has fallen a month or more,
Open to me the proud world's door,
Close it to her hot blood and tears."

In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
I hesitate to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

In sad but beautiful decay
Grey Hucknall kneels into the dust,
And cherishing her sacred trust,
Does blend her clay with other clay.

No sound of sandall'd pilgrim's tread,
No sign of cryptic stone or cross
Disturb the pilgrim's peaceful rest,
Or fret the proud impatient breast.
The bat flits through the broken pane,
The springtime bluebird gathers moss,
And builds in peace above his head,
Then goes, then comes, and builds again.
And it is well; not otherwise
Would he the sad sweet singer will.
The serene peace of Paradise
He sought—'tis his—the storm is still.
Secure in his eternal fame,
And blended pity and respect,
He does not feel the cold neglect,
And England does not fear the shame.

SANTONA (*yawning*).

And do men or maidens praise or purchase,
Where Christians dwell, this sorry gipsy gingle?

MINSTREL.

Neither do neither ! one does mock,
The other kill with a stately silence.

SANTONA.

Then why at all attempt to sing,
And wrong yourself and greatly others wrong ?
A bear does make a very sorry bird indeed ;
Maybe your fort is felling forest trees,
Or planting corn and yellow pumpkin seeds ?

MINSTREL.

I sing because I can but sing,
I court applause, I do confess,
And yet I could not sing the less,
Though I foreknew that every word
Should lie unheeded—die unheard :
And I a nameless gibb'ring shade
Go shivering on unto the end.
And I shall sing and sing and sing,
Sing ill or well, though men do chide,
Until a hand in mine is laid

To lead unto the other side.
Afar a ploughboy's song is heard,
In chorus with the building bird,
My song is his—his my reward.

I heard a redbreast on the wall,
And then I heard the truants' call,
And cast a storm of earth and stone.
He flew, and perch'd him far and lone,
Above a rushing cataract,
Where never living thing could track—
Where mate nor man nor living thing
Could ever heed or hear him sing,
And there he sang his song of spring,
As if a world were listening.
He sang because he could but sing,
Sweet bird, for he was born to sing.

A million hearts have felt as much
As ever prince of poets told,
With souls that scorn'd a colder touch
Than love refined to finest gold,

Yet drove the team and turn'd the mould,
And whistled songs and tragedies
That would have thrill'd to rage or tears ;
The beam and moon their lance and shield,
A moat, the furrow deep and broad,
And lived content through all their years
Unheard beyond their broken sod.

And shall I then be less than these ?
A million poets God hath wrought ;
But very few have made pretence,
And fewer still found utterance,
For words are shackles unto thought,
And I have almost wept to find
The brightest image of the mind,
When fetter'd down by form of word,
Droop dull and tame as prison'd bird—
Lose all the bright hues of the sky,
As does the clasped butterfly.

They walk'd their ideal world in peace,
They would not drag it down to fit
The mass of man with golden god—
They could not drag man up to it,

So lived and died without complain.
All tuneless in their full refrain,
They break in billows through the sod.

SANTONA. *Apart, and looking down the mountain to the declining moon.*

Well ! he at least would make a first-rate nurse ;
I would give him a character, first class ;
Could say, " He can come well recommended,"
For has he not sung them all asleep ?
The crooked moon, a surly brute, is rushing down
To gore the hill top with her horns.
The men do sleep, the mighty mountains sleep,
The beasts and birds have now a truce and peace.
All things repose but me——

MINSTREL.

And me, O Santona ! look on me.
Look on me, do you not know me now ?
[*Loosing her long hair upon her shoulders.*]
I am Zanora whom you did love of old.
I have follow'd, found you, and am unknown ;
Speak to me, embrace me, welcome me,

Oh answer me, speak, or I shall perish ;
I had not dream'd of this cold reception.

SANTONA (*bitterly*).

And he did receive her with open arms,
And they lived happy ever afterwards.
But my soul does rise up at the thought
As I behold you here, unsex'd, alone,
With the smell of the dead still in your hair.
I will not do or say else than as I feel,
Even though the customary course be left,
And thus a glowing tale be cut in two
With a blunt and most unromantic end.
You have robb'd me—robb'd me of my revenge,
For I do scorn a victory won thus,
One born not of my strength, but your own weak-
ness.
You are not the Zanora I did love,
For she has become a marble memory,
Chisell'd in my heart, and nought can change her.
Good night ! Folded yonder in your serape,
May you sleep as sound as you will be secure ;

And when to-morrow comes, like two of old,
You will turn you to the right or to the left,
Or I will turn, as I have said, aside.
Good-night, good-bye, for aye, and aye farewell !



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